

Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, Edmund Kizik, *Altes Reich und Alte Republik. Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen und Verflechtungen 1500–1806*, Darmstadt, 2014, WBG Verlag, 214 pp., WBG Deutsch-Polnische Geschichte, Bd. 2

This work by two historians from Poland and Germany looks at the bilateral relations between Poland and Germany in the early modern period. Aimed to fill a gap in the publishing market, it presents a comparative synthesis of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Republic) and the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (Reich). Written in German, it is targeted mainly at the German reader. However, Polish readers will also find it very informative.

The chronological boundaries of 1500–1806 are rather loose. Considering the history of Poland, the year 1500 is symbolic and stands for two other dates: 1493, when the first bicameral Sejm was summoned, and 1505 when the *Nihil Novi* constitution (law) was passed. For the German States, the boundary of the year 1500 is even less explicit, although the authors emphasize the historical significance of the beginnings of capitalist forms of production in the German territories. The end date, the year 1806, marks the collapse of the German Reich. The year 1795, the date of the Third Partition of Poland, would be probably more appropriate for the Commonwealth.

The geographical area under consideration is marked by the German Reich, the territories settled by the German speaking population, such as Ducal Prussia and Livonia, and many cities in the Polish Crown largely populated by Germans, especially Danzig (Gdańsk), Thorn (Toruń) and Elbing (Elbląg) on one side, and the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, extended by the areas populated by speakers of Polish (that is, Ducal Prussia and parts of Silesia) on the other. The geographical coverage of the study, which includes territories populated by both Poles and Germans, shows numerous 'multicultural regions of penetration' (*multikulturele Austauschräume*), where the Polish and German cultural influences created a platform for competition, but also mutual enrichment.

The work has a two-part structure. Part I is a comparative overview ('Überblick') of the most fundamental institutions in both countries, such as rulers' courts, parliaments, armies, the post, and the diplomatic services. The authors laboriously look for structural parallels, show similar social relations and ways of exercising authority, examine bilateral political, economic, religious and personal relations. Part II, 'Fragen und Perspektiven', focuses on widely discussed issues which have provoked many research questions in recent years. It looks at social and geographical mobility, cultural transfers, linguistic relations, the

origin of the Polish and German national identities, and national myths. Each area of study is illustrated with many often obscure examples of mutual enrichment and collaboration between the two nations.

The numbers of the Polish and German landed nobility are accentuated, who were among the most numerous in Europe (about 5–10 per cent in Poland, 1–3 per cent in the German states), as well as the fact that the concept of republican freedom was not a Polish specialty. The German freedoms, in terms of the relation of individual states to their rulers and the autonomous member states to the emperor, had a meaningful impact on the shaping of the elites' identity in the states of the Reich, similarly to the impact of the Golden Freedom on the identity of the landed nobility in the Commonwealth of the Two Nations and their attitude towards rulers (pp. 8–9, 21–22, 30–32). However, the two notions of freedom are not equated. The success of defensive political ideas is noted in the policies pursued by the two political unions (terms such as *Reichsstäte*, *Reichsverbände*, *Staatsverbände*, pp. 8–9, *Reiche*, p. 188 are used). However, the statement that in the modern era, the Polish-German border was one of the most peaceful borders in Europe (pp. 16–17, 24) is rather a simplification, considering that Brandenburg-Prussia supported Sweden during the Swedish Deluge, participated in the partition of Poland under the Treaty of Radnot signed in 1657, and finally annexed Elbing in 1698, while its recruiting officers notoriously violated the Polish border. Nevertheless, the authors rightly note the durability of Polish and German dynastic relations. Many Polish kings married German princesses (Sigismund Augustus, Sigismund III Vasa, Michael I (Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki), Augustus III¹), and German dukes were perceived as attractive suitors for Polish princesses. In spite of the rejection of the candidates of the House of Habsburg in the Polish elections of 1575 and 1587, the Polish Commonwealth had serious reasons to form an alliance with the German emperor (pp. 26, 66–67). Private relations between the Polish and German landed nobilities were sealed with many mixed marriages in Pomerania, Royal Prussia, Ducal Prussia, Great Poland, Livonia, and New March.

The authors show close intellectual and cultural relations between Polish and German courts, universities and towns. During the Protestant Reformation, Polish representatives of the reformed denominations liaised with German intellectuals. A long list of actors of the Polish and German intellectual, scientific and artistic scenes is presented. Even in the seventeenth century, when the religious schism in Europe and the identification of German culture with Protestant heresy could have diminished the appeal of the German intellectual potential, the Polish landed nobility studied in the German schools in Heidelberg, Altdorf, Ingolstadt, and so on on a massive scale. The German states, along Italy or France, were a must-see item on the itinerary of a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *grand tour* of a young magnate.

¹ Augustus II is not mentioned here, since he married Christine Eberhardine still as the Elector of Saxony.

While looking for the common ground, the authors do not avoid controversial topics which divided rather than united the Polish and German nations, such as deeply rooted mutual animosity. They look at the early birth of the topos of 'haughty Germans' (*hochmütige Deutsche*, p. 72) in Poland, and the propaganda, during the first free elections, which juxtaposed the Polish freedoms with the Habsburg absolutism, or the freedom-loving Polish landed nobility with the Germanophone burghers who did not have an understanding of the idea of freedom. In the seventeenth century, animosity was additionally fuelled by religious differences: the Catholic Pole was set against the German heretic. The eighteenth century, on the other hand, saw in the German lands the birth of two other stereotypes — an open-hearted, joyful and invincible (*offenherzig, witzig, unüberwindlich*) German, and an uncouth, savage and wasteful (*bäurisch, hochwild, Prasser*) Pole. They finally became part of the Prussian anti-Polish propaganda of *deutsche Ordnung* vs *polnische Wirtschaft* (pp. 179–80).

A separate chapter is devoted to the exceptional period of the Polish-Saxon union and the resulting political, economic, cultural and personal relations (pp. 79–96). The authors wisely do not support the myth that Augustus II was put on the Polish throne by the Russian army (we know that it was the Saxon army only). However, let us restore the truth — the ritual performed by Augustus II Wettin in Piekary (27 July 1697) was not a second open act of conversion, but a public confirmation of the conversion through participation in the Catholic rituals of the mass and communion (p. 79). The authors highlight the industrial and administrative activity of the Wettins, which aimed to stabilize their position and extend their reign in Poland. The effort to strengthen the position of the Wettin dynasty has been proven in the modern research; however, doubts arise whether it was accompanied by a comprehensive economic policy (p. 81).² An interesting paradox, unknown to many Poles, is brought to light: Stanisław I of the Polish family of Leszczyński, a rival of the Saxon dynasty to the Polish throne, ruled Lorraine from 1735, and thus became a duke of the German Reich (p. 80).

Another interesting chapter looks at the partitions of Poland and the related responsibility of Brandenburg-Prussia (pp. 97–130). The Polish point of view is focused on the annexation of the Polish territory. However, the authors rightly note that the imperialism pursued by Brandenburg-Prussia reached included the territories of the Reich: Swedish Pomerania, Jülich-Berg, Bavaria and Silesia. Nevertheless, the authors claim that relations between Brandenburg and Poland in the seventeenth century were marked by cooperation rather than conflict, whilst the policy of Brandenburg-Prussia shifted as late as in the second and third decades of the eighteenth century. According to the authors, an appetite for territorial extension at the cost of Poland appeared as late as at the times of Frederick II (the first plan of partition referred to in the text was

² Jacek Burdowicz-Nowicki indicated the problem, referring to the works of Uwe Schirmer of 1998, in his *Piotr I, August II i Rzeczpospolita 1697–1706*, Cracow, 2010, p. 155.

authored by future Frederick II in 1731 — pp. 99–100). We cannot agree with this view. Although up to a certain point in time Berlin refrained from open aggression, its consistent policy of annexation led to the seizure of Lauenburg, Bütow, Draheim (Łębork, Bytów, Drahim), and the territory of Elbing.³ From the beginning of the eighteenth century, new projects of annexation and partition were developed (in the years 1705, 1710, 1715, 1721, 1724/25, and 1732),⁴ which illustrated the consistent Prussian policy of territorial development. Therefore, the underlying concept of the pro-partition impetus of Frederick II was nothing new. Calling for eating the Polish Republic like an artichoke, leaf after leaf (pp. 103–04), Frederick II did not divert radically from the policy pursued by his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. In the light of the diplomatic correspondence of his predecessors on the throne, the acute resentment that Frederick the Great had towards Poles is very similar, although more openly declared and more profoundly investigated by researchers. Significant progress has been made in the recent years to understand the objectives and methods used by the Prussian diplomatic services.⁵ Mentioning the Prussian initiative of the First and Second Partitions of Poland, we should not forget that it was Russia's appetite which made them possible (p. 104). The authors make an important point that the interpretation of the partition as a benevolent act of Prussia, being part of its civilizing mission, is pure propaganda. Frederick II intentionally understated the value of the annexed Polish territories and propagated the myth of *polnische Wirtschaft* (pp. 104–05).⁶ The

³ Andrzej Kamieński, *Polska a Brandenburgia-Prusy w drugiej połowie XVII wieku. Dzieje polityczne*, Poznań, 2002.

⁴ Almut Bues, 'Comme un artichaut, feuille par feuille albo instrukcja ignorowania iura iuste', in *W cieniu wojen i rozbiorów. Studia z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej XVIII i początków XIX wieku*, ed. Urszula Kosińska, Dorota Dukwicz and Adam Danilczyk, Warsaw, 2014, pp. 39–66; Urszula Kosińska, *Sondaż czy prowokacja. Sprawa Lehmana z 1721 r. czyli o rzekomych planach rozbiorowych Augusta II*, Warsaw, 2009 (ibid. previous literature of the subject); eadem, *L'Affaire secrète, czyli nieznany plan rozbioru Polski z lat 1724–1726*, in *W cieniu wojen*, pp. 105–35 (all three texts are included in the volume, together with source appendices).

⁵ Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II*; Urszula Kosińska, *August II w poszukiwaniu sojusznika*, Warsaw, 2013; eadem, *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-pruskich w ostatnich latach panowania Augusta II: Misja Franza Moritza von Diebötze w Saksonii i Polsce w latach 1727–29*, in *Polska wobec wielkich konfliktów w Europie nowożytnej. Z dziejów dyplomacji i stosunków międzynarodowych w XV–XVIII wieku*, ed. Ryszard Skowron, Cracow, 2009, pp. 483–94; Zofia Zielińska, *Polska w okowach 'systemu północnego' 1763–1766*, Cracow, 2012; eadem, 'Rzeczpospolita między Prusami a Rosją w świetle polsko-pruskiego sporu o cło generalne w 1765 r.', parts I and II, *KH*, 115, 2008, 2, pp. 5–52 and 3, pp. 5–60; previous research is brilliantly summarized in *Prusy w okresie monarchii absolutnej (1701–1806)*, ed. Bogdan Wachowiak, Poznań, 2010.

⁶ In fact, what counted was absolute power, desire for new territories and fulfilment of political obligations at the cost of Poland; this brutal reality is shown through a synchronic analysis of Russian, Prussian and Austrian diplomatic files, recently e.g. in Zielińska, *Polska w okowach*, passim.

authors direct the reader's attention to the prompt intellectual Germanization of the annexed territories: the German language was made official, in place of Polish and Latin (pp. 109–10), and traditional Polish outfits were banned. The arrogance of the new administration strengthened the negative image of Germans especially in the area of the Prussian partition (less so in Galicia, where no religious differences existed) as supercilious envoys of a foreign authority, hostile to the Polish culture. The image was counterbalanced by a myth (which became an educational pattern for the next generations born under the yoke of national bondage) of a noble Pole, an avid Catholic, enthusiast for freedom, and ardent patriot ready to sacrifice his (or her) life for the freedom of Poland.

The chapter 'Mobilität und Kulturtransfer' reveals the paradox of the transfer of culture, which has been eagerly researched in Germany under the term *Kulturträger*. In Poland, the transfer of the German cultural influences (*Kulturträgerei*) has ironic and pejorative connotations. Polish people prefer cultural imports from Italy, France or the Netherlands. Certainly, cultural imports from Germany do not go unnoticed; however, the stress is often put on Polonization of the *Trägers*. Research has been intensified in the recent years on migration, transfer routes, acculturation and cultural assimilation (Bambers in Great Poland, German inhabitants of Polish towns), as well as long-term cultural differentiation (such as linguistic islands inhabited by native speakers of Polish at the mouth of the Vistula River near Stuhm (Sztum), and analogously by German-speaking populations in Great Poland, German books in Poland, Lutheran prayer books in Polish for the Mazovian subjects in Ducal Prussia).

In the chapter 'Sprachlich-literarisch-kulturelle Verflechtungen' the authors rightly note that multilingualism was not an exclusively Polish phenomenon. Foreign languages, such as Czech, Polish, Sorbian, Danish, Frisian, and obviously Latin and French, which was the language of the social elites, were also used in the Reich (p. 123). Passages describing how attractive the Polish language and culture was may be of special interest to Polish readers. The tradition of the Polish coffin portrait was adopted by the evangelical Christian landed nobility of German origin, such as the Unrugs and the Prittwitzs (pp. 76–77). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the native German landed nobility of Royal Prussia learnt Polish to pursue a political career. The merchants of Danzig sent their children to Poland to study the language, which they needed to liaise with their most important trade clients. In the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, twenty-seven different textbooks for Polish as a foreign language were published only in Danzig in an impressive number of eighty-three editions (pp. 134–36). Poles, on the other hand, learnt German to maintain trading relations with the German states, but also because German was the language of everyday communication at the Polish court where Habsburg queens resided.

In the chapter 'Multikulturelle Austauschräume und regionale Entwicklungen', focus is put on the regional and national awareness of German

inhabitants of Royal Prussia and Danzig. Living in the German environment, they were also full-right members of *Regnum Sarmaticum* (p. 141). The double identity of inhabitants of ethnically and linguistically diverse territories is a worthwhile subject of study.

A separate chapter is devoted to the role of Jews in the Polish Republic and the German states (pp. 153–67). Although, throughout the work, the authors look for similarities and common ground, here they point out the difference in the attitude of Germans and Poles to the Jewish nation. This difference is undoubtedly the reason why the Polish Commonwealth was referred to *Paradisus Iudeorum*. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Commonwealth was the main refuge for the Jews expelled from Western Europe. The Jewish community in Poland grew from about 150,000 at the end of the sixteenth century to about 750,000, that is 6–7 per cent of the entire population, in 1772. Here, Jews enjoyed personal and religious freedom. They could build houses, pray and establish their own self-government. Although Jews established communities and inhabited entire town districts, they did not live in ghettos, and there was no practice of marking out the Jewish population. In spite of unavoidable conflicts of an economic nature (such as competition with the guild system), mutual relations were marked by tolerance. By contrast, until 1792 Prussia engaged in a policy of deporting Jews, and issued its Emancipation Edict as late as 1812 (p. 158).

The last chapter, with the meaningful title ‘*Finis Poloniae und Finis Germaniae (1772–1806)*’, elaborates on the similar fate that met the Polish and the German federations, and the dependency between the processes leading to the partition of the Polish Commonwealth and the collapse of the Old Reich. After all, German and English periodicals warned against the Prussian and Austrian attacks on the integrity of the German Reich (similar to the attacks on Poland) as early as in 1772–73 (pp. 187–88).

The bibliography covers only the key items in the literature on the subject issued after the year 1998, since the years 1900–98 are covered in German specialist literature.⁷ Most of the publications are in German. Several Polish titles are mentioned, but the list lacks some of the greatest names among researchers of political history, such as Jerzy Michalski, or Zofia Zielińska. Indices of names, geographical names and subjects are provided. The index of references to Polish or German geographical names is inconsistent. For example, there is no separate reference for Królewiec (Königsberg), the item ‘Taurroggen — lit. Tauragė’ lacks reference to the Polish ‘Taurogi’, and the item ‘Dnjepr — Ukr. Dnipro’ lacks reference to the Polish name ‘Dniepr’. The index of subjects contains only a dozen or so items.

⁷ *Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Bibliographie 1900–1998*, 4 vols, ed. Andreas Lawaty and Wiesław Mincer, Wiesbaden, 2000.

In spite of some minor flaws, the work provides a sound introduction into the intricate history of relations between Poland and Germany, and is a good starting point for further research. In a nutshell, it is a captivating attempt at a synthetic and parallel presentation of complex historical processes.

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Benedict Wagner-Rundell, *Common Wealth, Common Good. The Politics of Virtue in Early Modern Poland-Lithuania*, Oxford, 2015, Oxford University Press, pp. 189

In analysing the role of the concept of virtue in the political culture and discourse of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, Benedict Wagner-Rundell tackles a problem that is undoubtedly interesting and important but one that has not really featured prominently in Polish studies. The question of virtue, moral aspects of the discussion about the state among the *szlachta* (nobility) has so far failed to arouse any great interest among scholars. As the author rightly notes (p. 5ff), it was often treated as futile moralizing leading to a paralysis of political thought. In an extensive and very interesting introduction Wagner-Rundell adopts two propositions as a starting point for his reflection. The first — that virtue was an indispensable part of the political discourse and vision of the state at the time; the second — that adopting such a vision was neither a barrier to nor a substitute for the discussion about reform of the Commonwealth. Moreover, he believes and tries to demonstrate that the concept of virtue was not only of key significance to political thought of the day, but also had a great potential as a starting point for proposals for reform (p. 13).

Although the title of the book suggests a very broad scope of study, in fact it focuses on a brief period: the first half of Augustus II's reign, 1697–1717. This is somewhat disappointing to readers expecting an analysis of the problem over a longer period. On the other hand, the choice of this particular moment in the history of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania as a case study seems to be appropriate. Given what happened during the reign of Jan Kazimierz, I am not sure whether indeed 'this combination of internal and external challenges tested the *szlachta* state as never before' (p. 14), but undoubtedly, as they found themselves in a serious crisis at the time, the *szlachta* had to face some fundamental questions concerning the functioning and, in fact, the very existence of its state.

The author analyses, on the one hand, broader political treatises and on the other — texts written directly in the course of the political debate. This is the basis of the structure of the book, with Chapters Two ('Calls for Moral Revival') and Four ('Proposals for Radical Reform') being devoted to the treatises by Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, Stanisław Dunin Karwicki, Jerzy Dzierżyszycki and to

Eclipsis poloniæ (which the author treats as an anonymous work),¹ and Chapters Three, Five and Six — to, respectively, *sejmiki* (regional assemblies), the Sejm (central parliament) of 1712–13 and proposals for reform of the Confederation of Tarnogród. A framework of sorts is provided by the introductory chapter ('The Ideal of the Commonwealth'), and two chapters summing up the book: Seven ('A Reforming Moment?'), in which the author wonders why the rather common proposals for reform did not bring any real effect, and Eight ('Wider Contexts') showing the Polish virtue discourse in a wider European context or, to be more specific, comparing it to the English discourse. The sources used by the author encompass the treatises mentioned above, *sejmiki* records, Sejm diary records as well as official documents produced during the Confederation. Unfortunately, what escaped the author's attention was political literature of the day, that is small but quite numerous pamphlets which emerged, for example, during Augustus II's election and which later also commented on other important events and conflicts. I also include here writings presented some time ago by Henryk Olszewski in his monograph *Doktryny polityczne czasów saskich 1697–1740* (Warsaw, 1960), a book still of significance to studies of political thought of the Saxon era and clearly underestimated by Wagner-Rundell — he refers to it just twice and rather marginally at that. Speaking of the literature, I also miss Jacek Burdowicz-Nowicki's monograph;² although it does not examine the topic explored by Wagner-Rundell, it is nevertheless a fundamental work on the period in question. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the author is well-versed in the current state of research and discusses it thoroughly in the introduction. When it comes to source texts, another work that perhaps should have been considered is Franciszek Radzewski's treatise *Kwestyje polityczne obojętne* in view of Urszula Kosińska's findings concerning the date of its writing.³ However, in this case the decisive factor may have been, indeed, its much later date of publication, as Radzewski's treatise, even if written in the period analysed in the book, contributed in no way to the discussion going on at the time.

What I find convincing are the conclusions of the introductory chapter, primarily the fact that, as the author rightly emphasizes, despite huge differences in wealth and, consequently, social status between various groups of the *szlachta* in the analysed period, differences in the political ideology, what the author calls republicanism, are hardly visible. The author's remark concerning the differences between the Lithuanian and the Polish *szlachta* (p. 31) is not supported by any reference to sources (or literature); it is an expression of commendable caution and possible suggestion as to the possibilities of further

¹ The author seems to be slightly late (p. 59) with his explanation that the piece was attributed to Stanisław Szczuka; in addition, he fails to mention that Jacek Staszewski's findings, on which his conclusions are based, are disputed by Henryk Palkij in Szczuka's biographical note in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*.

² Jacek Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II i Rzeczpospolita. 1697–1706*, Kraków, 2010.

³ Urszula Kosińska, 'Kwestyje polityczne, obojętne [Franciszka Radzewskiego]. Traktat polityczny z roku 1699', *KH*, 102, 1995, 3/4, pp. 91–112.

research rather than statement of fact. Wagner-Rundell provides an accurate list of the foundations of this 'republicanism' — liberty, law and mixed government (p. 28). However, I would advise great caution in applying to the last item the term 'collective sovereignty'. The authors of the theory of mixed government / *monarchia mixta* did not use the notion of sovereignty but that of power, just like their Polish followers. If members of the *szlachta* spoke of what we would call today sovereignty (they did not use such an expression, occasionally using the term *plena potestas* instead), this was referred to either (earlier) the rule of law, or the entire Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, or the *szlachta* as a community and it is most likely to that community embodied in the *sejmiki* that the expression *communi consultatione*, the basis of '*communi bono* of the fatherland', formulated at the *sejmik* of Liw and cited by the author, refers (p. 24).

This chapter is a good introduction to the foundations of the *szlachta*'s vision of the Commonwealth's government and its link to the attitudes of participants in political life, primarily to the need to place the common over private good, that is virtue. It seems that the author overestimates the importance of Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, to whose theories he devotes much attention, as his impact on the Polish political discourse was rather limited. It may have been better for the author to draw more extensively on the literature on the subject, especially on Claude Backvis's book, unfortunately, not included here.⁴ Chapter One is, in a way, complemented by Chapter Three ('Government of Local Worthies') examining, mainly on the basis of the literature, the functioning of the *sejmiki* and, above all, their growing role in the face of the crisis affecting the central institutions of the state. I do not entirely agree with the author's opinion that the rise of local government at the turn of the eighteenth century and the fact that the *sejmiki* sought to take control over as many affairs of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania as possible were an attempt to cleanse the country of corruption and to restore virtuous government for the common good (p. 56).

On the other hand I fully agree with Wagner-Rundell that the 'virtue discourse', if it can be called that way, was a very important component of the Polish political discourse. I also think that his analysis of the above-mentioned treatises presented in Chapters Two and Four has enabled him to convincingly demonstrate that within the traditional discourse it was possible to come across interesting proposals for political reform, that the discourse was not as futile as it might seem.

However, some of the theses associated with proposed interpretations of specific contributions prompt me to enter into a polemic with the author. This concerns in particular his analysis of Lubomirski's and Karwicki's works. In the case of *De vanitate consiliorum* I object to the treatise being treated as a model example of purely moralizing approach to reform of the state. According to Wagner-Rundell, Lubomirski believed that 'the true task of reviving the Commonwealth is one

⁴ Claude Backvis, *Szkice o kulturze staropolskiej*, Warsaw, 1975.

of restoring good behaviour, not of institutional tinkering' (p. 36). *De vanitate* is a difficult text, causing scholars problems for many years, which has led to very different attempts at its interpretation. However, it is not, in my opinion, a programme for a reform of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, nor is it quite a political diagnosis. Rather, it is a paradoxical guide for a ruler — in the form of a perverse king's mirror — showing him how to find his way in the political reality of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The questions of virtue or lack thereof do constitute an element of the description of this reality, but I have the impression that the problem is to some extent secondary when compared with that of the technique of governing the Commonwealth. Hence my serious doubts as to whether the virtue discourse is the right tool in the analysis of the work in question.

I have even more reservations about the treatment of Karwicki's treatise.⁵ Wagner-Rundell has placed Karwicki alongside Działuszycki and the author of *Eclipsis* in the chapter devoted to writers whose main goal was about, as he puts it, 'restoring virtuous government'. Yet Karwicki, despite a perfunctory tribute to the traditional understanding of the link between citizens' attitudes and functioning of the state paid in *De ordinanda*,⁶ quite consistently kept the moral aspect of politics out of both his works, which in any case he announced openly in *Egzorbitancyje*, when, having described 'drowning in private interests and profits, and lack of concern for the common good', he said that 'having put this aside for further reform, we shall now proceed to political considerations',⁷ and then consistently followed this through. His proposals for reform, quite radical indeed, were intended to improve the functioning of the Commonwealth and not the virtuousness of its citizens. I do not agree either, at least with regard to Karwicki, with the view that 'The need to address the threat of corruption thus drove the radical reformers to propose a rebalancing of the *forma mixta* in favour of its democratic element' (p. 73). This was meant, as Karwicki explained openly, to avoid confusion stemming from the continuing dispute *inter maiestatem et libertatem*, and not to raise the morale of those participating in political life. I also have serious doubts as to whether in his (and Działuszycki's) case it is true that 'the assumption that *szlachta* were essentially virtuous lay behind the radicals' sweeping proposals for reform' (p. 77).

⁵ I consider the information that it appeared in print in 1746 (p. 77) to be a simple mistake — as we know it remained in manuscript form until Krzyżanowski's edition of 1871.

⁶ 'nie tak dobrymi prawami kwitnie każde państwo, jak dobrymi i dzielnymi obywatelami' (for a state flourishes not so much thanks to good laws but thanks to good and brave citizens), Stanisław Dunin Karwicki, 'O potrzebie urzędzenia Rzeczypospolitej (*De ordinanda Republica*)', in idem, *Dzieła polityczne z początku XVIII wieku*, transl. and ed. Adam Przyboś and Kazimierz Przyboś, Kraków, 1992, p. 123.

⁷ 'utopienie się w prywatnych interesach i pożytkach, a naprzeciw niedbalstwo o dobro pospolite', 'do dalszej niżej poprawy odłożywszy, teraz do polityckich pójdzimy konsyderacyi', Stanisław Dunin Karwicki, 'Egzorbitancyje we wszystkich trzech stanach Rzeczypospolitej krótko zebrane', in idem, *Dzieła polityczne*, pp. 24, 25.

The divergence between my and the author's opinion about Karwicki's work leads to the crucial question of how broadly we will define the 'politics of virtue' mentioned in the title. Will we limit it only to contributions the authors of which saw a clear link between citizens' attitudes and the functioning of the state, and built their programmes or political judgements on that, or will we refer it more broadly to the concept of the state as a community existing for the common good? I am inclined to favour the former, while Wagner-Rundell seems to be opting for the latter, which indeed encompasses virtually all Polish political pronouncements from between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, as the political discourse of the *szlachta* Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania was based on a vision of the state as a community seeking the common good (understood differently in different periods) of the citizens making up this community.

A very broad approach to the problem has prompted the author to analyse such diverging issues as depriving the kings of the right to distribute lands and offices, abuse of power by hetmans and violence perpetrated by the army (the main thread in Chapter Five, 'The Sejm of 1712–13'), demands to withdraw the Saxon troops from the Commonwealth and, finally, the dispute *inter maiestatem et libertatem*. Undoubtedly, judgements expressed with regard to attitudes appeared in all those discussions, for, as Wagner-Rundell rightly points out, 'the political language of corruption has frequently been deployed merely as polemical tool in factional conflicts' (p. 44). It seems to me, however, that the analysis should be more nuanced and should take into account also other factors influencing political programmes. For example, when it comes to the question of distribution, it was important — at least on the level of platitudes — to restore the virtue of officials, though what mattered much more was whose 'men' they would be, thus, in fact, who would wield power. This was discussed openly. Similarly, the possibility of being 'corrupted' by the king was considered not so much on moral grounds, but rather in terms of the monarch's growing influence, that is the threat of *absolutum dominium*. I do not quite understand either why the author associates the proposal to deprive the king of the distribution rights with 'radicals like Karwicki' (p. 126), while in fact the proposal to deprive the king of the right to distribute offices appeared already in the sixteenth century and was one of the most often recurring political demands put forward by the *szlachta*.

On the other hand, the main thread of Chapter Five, the question of abuse of power by hetmans, undoubtedly analysed partly with reference to virtue or, to be more precise, corruption of those holding the highest offices in the army, referred largely, however, to the question of liberty, the threat posed to it (or not) by the hetmans' power; the objective, also avowed objective, of those seeking to limit the hetmans' omnipotence was to prevent them from harming their fellow citizens, irrespective of their virtue or lack thereof. In turn, although complaints about abuses perpetrated by Polish and Saxon troops obviously referred to their misdeeds, what mattered for the participants in the debate was not the

soldiers' virtue but lack of military discipline, the fact that the soldiers were a threat to the liberty and safety of citizens. In the case of the Saxon troops this was compounded by the fact that the king had broken the law and was seeking *absolutum dominium*.

What also slightly worries me is the reduction of the dispute *inter maiestatem et libertatem* to a fight for a virtuous collective government against the ruler's private interests (pp. 98, 105), especially given the fact that the author does not support these particular assertions with source quotes. Assuming a very broad interpretation of the virtue discourse, this interpretation is acceptable, yet it seems to me that it greatly simplifies the problem, that the power struggle aspect disappears in it as does the defence against the king's despotism.

All these reservations concern the placement of emphasis, the need to take into consideration in the analysis also other aspects of talking and thinking about the state, but they do not undermine the main value of Benedict Wagner-Rundell's book, namely the fact that the author demonstrates in it the extremely important role of civic engagement and the ideal of public good in the vision of the state as it functioned at the time. I fully agree with the author that for the *szlachta* it was an important tool to assess the situation of the Commonwealth (p. 151), which is why scholars, too, should pay more attention to it. What also seems important to me is the author's attempt to compare the Polish contributions and the republican discourse of the English. It shows how initially quite similar discourses become increasingly divergent, when in the eighteenth century the English introduce new concepts (prosperity, security), gradually abandoning the language of virtue, to which the Polish political language and the *szlachta*'s concept of the state remained faithful. On my part I would also add that in the late eighteenth century the concept, in a way, met Jean-Jacques Rousseau's vision.

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Marius Turda, *Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2014, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. X, 343, Science, Technology and Medicine in Modern History

Eugenics and Nation by the Oxford-based Romanian historian of science is among those works that, without a doubt, fill a gap in the current state of research. The Hungarian eugenics movement has so far been considered to be of marginal significance, not only in the context of world eugenics, but also as part of the Hungarian history of ideas. Unjustly so. The author of *Eugenics and Nation* argues that in the first two decades of the twentieth century the Hungarian debate about a biological reform of the nation and of society was among the most dynamic in Europe. There is no doubt that it was also foremost in the

region, both when it came to the professional standing and expertise of people exploring the issue, and the number of organizations and publications devoted to it. The strong position of the Hungarian eugenics movement in Europe was a reflection of the place Hungary itself occupied in that period: a state beset by social and ethnic conflicts, but also a grand modernization project, a symbol of which was the capital city Budapest, expanded at the time on an imperial scale.

The author of the book is one of the most active historians of science of recent years and his interest in eugenics goes beyond the territory of the Habsburg Empire.¹ After the publication of the present book he edited an extensive selection of papers from Central and Eastern Europe of key importance to the subject in question.² Nor is *Eugenics and Nation* Turda's first work devoted to racial ideas in pre-Trianon Hungary. The topic was the focus of his first monograph published over a decade ago.³ His experience, confirmed by a long list of publications, has enabled him to develop a characteristic style combining the history of medicine and history of ideas. Turda identifies key points around which crystallize the positions of participants in the discourse, and describes them in detail, using selected examples. Next, having defined the extreme positions, he demonstrates how political events bring some of them into focus or push them to the margins. There are three such decisive moments in *Eugenics and Nation*, moments which changed the existing frame of reference. The first was the introduction of eugenics into intellectual high society in the early twentieth century, the second came during the First World War, while the third was associated with the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic. This narrative is accompanied (again: a characteristic of this author, present already, for example, in *The Idea of National Superiority*) by meticulous attention to the international context of the various disputes.

In seven chapters preceded by an introduction and followed by an afterword Marius Turda presents an outline of the history of eugenic ideas in Hungary. A pioneering role in the process was played by people associated with *Huszadik Század*, a sociological journal with a programme for a modern state drawing on positivism, Darwinism and socialism. Discussions inspired by Oszkár Jászi led to the emergence of quite varied views on biological policy, oscillating between the British and the German models. Simplifying these two positions, it could be said that the proponents of the former were more inclined to fight social ills (as well as phenomena they defined as such), while the advocates of German racial hygiene were interested primarily in the place of ethnic Hungarians in the European 'war of the races'. The Hungarian discussions

¹ Cf. Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics*, Basingstoke, 2010; idem, *Eugenism și antropologia rașială în România, 1874–1944*, București, 2008; idem and Aaron Gillette, *Latin' Eugenics in Comparative Perspective*, London and New York, 2014.

² *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900–1945. Sources and Commentaries*, ed. Marius Turda, London, 2015; the part devoted to Poland was edited by Kamila Uzarczyk.

³ Idem, *The Idea of National Superiority in Central Europe, 1880–1918*, Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter, 2005, the Romanian edition was published in 2015.

from the early twentieth century were characteristically dominated by the first ('social') view among professional doctors, who sometimes held decidedly left-wing views (like, for example, József Madzsar). The topics discussed at the time fully corresponded to the contemporary Western European debate, and included, for example, birth control or anti-alcohol campaigns. Very soon more radical ideas appeared in Hungary, too, ideas encompassing legal regulations protecting the family as well as society against 'degeneracy' and, at the same time, calling on the state to adopt an active eugenic policy (for example, sterilisation of people with hereditary diseases). That period saw the emergence of the first Hungarian-language periodicals devoted to social hygiene, later also racial hygiene, and the first organizations focused on these issues. The institutionalization of the eugenics movement was completed by several great conferences, beginning with the international anti-alcoholic congress held in September 1905 in Budapest.

Although, as Marius Turda argues, the Hungarian discussions about the state's pursuit of a eugenic policy immediately reached the level of those in Western Europe, the most dynamic country in Central and Eastern Europe also had some specific qualities, not really to be found west of Austria-Hungary. Sometimes they stemmed from the speed with which the Hungarian debate about eugenics exploded and then dwindled. The speed blurred the ideological divisions within the movement, boosting at the same time its political effectiveness. The results were sometimes surprising. For example, people with left-wing views were, more often than in Britain, France or Germany, among the supporters of negative eugenics (that is eugenics focused on restricting the reproduction of people considered to be of little biological value). The Hungarian specificity came to the fore also when it came to neo-Malthusianism. Turda cites enthusiastic British opinions about the traditionally low birth rate of families in some ethnically Hungarian regions. In this case the objective which the Western European advocates of a lower rate of natural increase planned to achieve through education and state policy had already been achieved, and in a region that was economically and culturally backward at that.

The face of the Hungarian eugenics movement changed with the outbreak of the First World War. Although linking biological propositions to a right-wing ideology was not a new phenomenon, at that moment it became the predominant stance. Characteristically, the left-wing milieu of *Huszadik Század* was not among the founders of the Eugenics Committee established in 1914. Its president was Pál Teleki, who also headed the Turanian Society the goal of which was to improve the Hungarian race. As a result of consolidation taking place at the time the eugenicists parted ways with the feminists and entered into an alliance with conservative women's organizations. The idea, motivating members of the Eugenics Committee, of a strong and numerous nation could no longer be naturally reconciled with neo-Malthusianism; the dominant stance in the organization would henceforth be pro-natal. On the eve of the war the Hungarian and the German racial hygiene movements were finally brought closer together (the

greatest advocate of this on the Hungarian side was the anthropologist Géza Hoffmann).

The conservative and nationalist turn was consolidated following mobilization and then the horrific human losses and social consequences of the war. In the first phase of the conflict efforts undertaken by the Eugenics Committee focused on protecting motherhood (this was, for example, the objective of community nurses, an institution introduced in 1916), increasing the birth rate and fighting venereal diseases. In addition to huge campaigns, there were also campaigns on a rather smaller scale, like the one promoting breast feeding. In 1916 Hungarian eugenics entered a brief though very intense period of rapid development. The goal of all racial hygiene movements — to gain direct influence on the state's biological policy — was achieved in Transleithania with the establishment of the National Military Welfare Office (Országos Hadigondozó Hivatal) headed by Teleki. Its activity was focused on the period following the end of the war, though some demands, for example to raise taxes for childless families and families with just one child, were put into practice even before the fall of the monarchy. In October 1917 Budapest hosted a large public health congress, which not only marked a symbolic apotheosis of the entire movement, but was also a forum for practical discussions about the state's health and social policies controlled by eugenicists.

Two Hungarian revolutions — liberal-democratic of 1918 and Bolshevik of 1919 — changed the state's policy, emphasising positive eugenics focused on the urban proletariat. In practice this meant a continuation of welfare programmes and continued fight against still spreading venereal diseases, but there were also more significant changes in terms of political declarations. Neither the elitism, nor the nationalism of right-oriented eugenicists could be reconciled with the ideals of democracy or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Although proponents of racial hygiene were not persecuted, they acutely felt the loss of their dominant position in the public debate about society's health. These emotions are cited by the author to explain their subjective conviction that both regimes were hostile to eugenic ideas. It could also be said that during the 'white terror' of the early years of Miklós Horthy's rule to declare oneself to be a victim of communist dictatorship was undoubtedly a manifestation of not just political beliefs but also common sense. The same reasons prompted some advocates of eugenics to join the revisionist campaign, in which a leading role was again played by Teleki.

The pioneering nature of *Eugenics and Nation* also means that the author does not really have a chance to enter into a discussion with his predecessors. Thus Turda mentions only those studies that touched upon the subject of eugenics even if only marginally. What does constitute a research context for him is the historiography — rapidly developing in recent years — devoted to the subject in other peripheral countries of Europe: the Balkan and Baltic countries as well as countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This external perspective has an effect on the nature of his narrative. He approaches the subject with a predefined set of

research questions stemming from studies into other eugenic movements and then proceeds to look for their Hungarian equivalents. Such an approach has many advantages; above all, it makes the story understandable to readers not very familiar with the Hungarian cultural and historical context. On the other hand, the approach keeps potential developmental anomalies out of the author's sight. In order to verify this reservation, other, Hungarian studies into the subject will be needed, however. Their authors will certainly have to refer to Turda's book and hopefully they will not content themselves with just finding several spelling mistakes and questionable translations of Hungarian names that can be encountered here and there in *Eugenics and Nation*.

What seems to be the biggest asset of Marius Turda's book — more than making up for the few errors — is the fact that the author places Hungarian eugenics and eugenics in general in its correct historical context. Fortunately, Turda shies away from facile and quick moral judgements. 'Fortunately' not because the phenomenon does not deserve critical moral judgements, but because moral condemnation is all too often combined with giving up trying to understand its mechanisms. Regardless of the dire consequences of many attempts on the part of states to improve human biology, eugenics did constitute an integral part of the twentieth-century modernization programme. For many physicians, politicians, sociologists and social activists it was as obvious as hygiene or electricity. Rejection of this particular component of the 'modernization package' was a rare and individually motivated attitude. Ideas associated with eugenics inspired both the left and the right, socialists and catholic bishops (for example, Bishop of Székesfehérvár Ottokár Prohászka). Advocates of eugenics, whatever its definition, were, however, divided on account of fundamental differences in their worldviews, differences probably most clearly expressed in the question of whether society or the nation was to be the subject of biological engineering. It was precisely nationalization of racial ideas, very clearly visible in the Hungarian example, that eventually polarized eugenicists. At the same time it was part of a broader phenomenon associated with modernity in just as complicated a manner — the rise of nationalisms in twentieth-century Europe.

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Tadeusz Wolsza, *'To co widziałem przekracza swą grozą najśmielsze fantazje'. Wojenne i powojenne losy Polaków wizytujących Katyń w 1943 roku* ['The things I saw go beyond the most daring dreadful visions'. The wartime and post-war stories of Poles visiting Katyn in 1943], Warsaw, 2015, Instytut Historii PAN, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, Wydawnictwo Neriton, 349 pp.

This book by Tadeusz Wolsza, an historian who has devoted much of his academic career to the study of the Katyń massacre, highlights those aspects of the crime that have thus far been dealt with at the margins of his monographs, the focus of which lay elsewhere, or in a variety of articles and contributions. As indicated by its title, it aims to give an account of the war and mainly post-war experiences of the members of Polish delegations — writers, scholars, photographers, journalists, doctors, the Polish Red Cross workers, factory labourers, officers held in German captivity, and the relatives of the victims of Soviet crimes — who, either as a result of the pressure from the Germans or in response to the opportunity they created, visited the exhumation site in the Katyń Forest in the spring of 1943. Forming organized groups, they were given a chance to see the scale of the crime, the examination work carried out by the anatomic pathologists to whom it was entrusted and a large-scale propaganda campaign launched by the Germans in connection with the massacre.¹

Wolsza's focus is thus on those who were subjected to interrogation by 'Lublin'² prosecutors and who suffered years of harassment in the post-war Poland because of a few hours spent, usually as a result of coercion, in the Katyń Forest in the spring of 1943. Having participated in some of the actions that formed part of the German propaganda campaign, they came to be considered an inconvenience or even a threat to the Soviet policy regarding different aspects of the Katyń massacre. Unlike the hearings held before Polish military courts in London, the goal of 'domestic prosecution' was not to establish the truth but to intimidate the people who had visited Katyń as members of the delegations targeted by the German propaganda, and to prevent them from talking/subdue them into silence about what they learned in the course of the exhumations carried out by Gerhard Butz's team and the International Medical Board and which was at odds with the spurious Soviet report prepared by the Burdenko Commission.

¹ Piotr Łysakowski, 'Prasa niemiecka o Katyniu. Jak niemiecka propaganda przedstawiała w 1943 r. sprawę mordu popełnionego na polskich oficerach', in *Katyń. Problemy i zagadki*, ed. Jerzy Janicki, Warsaw, 1990, pp. 88–114, *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, vol. 1; idem, 'Zbrodnia katyńska w kleszczach niemieckiej propagandy (prasa niemiecka o Katyniu)', in *Zbrodnia katyńska między prawdą a kłamstwem*, ed. Marek Tarczyński, Warsaw, 2008, pp. 18–49, *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, vol. 23; see also: Radosław Morawski, 'Katyń w niemieckiej propagandzie', *Pamięć.pl*, 2013, 12, pp. 10–13.

² 'Lublin Poland' — Poland in the years 1944–1945 ruled by the 'Lublin' government subservient to Moscow.

The work is certainly an original contribution to the historiography of the Katyń massacre, which, given the fact that the research into the topic in question has flourished since the partial opening of post-Soviet archives, must be strongly emphasized.³

Wolsza has again managed to prove that in spite of significant progress achieved in the field of Katyń studies, it is still possible to extend our knowledge of the issue. However, this possibility lies less in the reconstructing of the circumstances in which the decision of 5 March 1940 was taken, in the revealing of how it was executed, or in the recounting of the misrepresentation of the truth in the decades which followed, than in examining the social consequences of the crime, that is, the way in which it affected the lives of those who were in some way put in touch with the issue of the Katyń massacre and who thus became a hindrance to the Lublin rulers of Poland and especially to their Soviet superiors.

The two-part title (the pre-title is a quotation from the interview with Jan Emil Skiński) is a reference to the author's previous monograph devoted to the 'Polish' London's reaction to the disclosure of the mass graves of Polish prisoners of war in Katyń.⁴ Both works form a kind of diptych.

The work's structure is untypical, not to say highly controversial. It consists of fifteen studies of which only nine deal with the main topic (the wartime and post-war experiences of the Poles visiting Katyń). Apart from the traditional introduction (definition of purpose, information on the present state of research), the first lengthy chapter (an essay or a study), which gives a general account of the wartime and post-war experiences of the Poles visiting Katyń in 1943, also serves as an introduction to the topic. In my opinion it can be regarded as a successful attempt to introduce the reader to the chapters that discuss various aspects of the post-war fate of those whom the Germans had taken to the exhumation site in Katyń. But Wolsza decided to add two more studies that can also be considered additional introductions. One concerns the reaction of 'Polish' London to the discovery of the Katyń massacre and is a kind of a recapitulation of Wolsza's previous book.⁵ The other presents Polish communists' response to the crime in question. While the first is in my opinion out of place, the second, offering — just as the rest of the book — a chronological account that encompasses the period of up to mid-1950s, provides a useful background against which to discuss the fate of the people in question in post-war Poland.

Chapters on Reverend Tomasz Rusek and the editors of the collaborationist press (the press controlled by the occupant and used as a vehicle for the German propaganda) are outside the scope of the work's subject-matter,

³ See *Zbrodnia katyńska. Bibliografia 1940–2010*, ed. Izabela Kowalska and Elżbieta Pawińska, Warsaw, 2010.

⁴ Tadeusz Wolsza, *'Katyń to już na zawsze katy i katowani'. W 'polskim Londynie' o sowieckiej zbrodni w Katyniu (1940–1945)*, Warsaw, 2008.

⁵ *Ibid.*

and so are two interconnected texts about Waław Pych's confabulations and the letters concerning the crime and sent in to the Polish Radio's broadcast called Fala 49 ('Wave, 49'), replaced after a few years by 'Fala 56' ('Wave, 56').

The whole is not a typical monograph offering a coherent account divided into chapters and discussing a specific problem. It is a collection of mini-monographs or, to be more precise, of articles each of which constitutes a distinct whole. All of these pieces of scholarship centre around the Katyń massacre, but in a way which they do so is often so removed from the work's titular subject that the whole is to be regarded as a collection of different sketches rather than a monograph. Absent from the book are conclusions and a bibliography, which typically appear in scholarly monographs. Their absence only throws into relief the heterogeneous character of the whole volume. The same can be said of the English abstracts which, attached to all the chapters, deepen the impression of dealing with a collection of loose sketches. Although the remark is not to be treated as a criticism but as a simple statement of fact, it is possible to imagine that the valuable factual material gathered by Wolsza could be arranged into a coherent monographic study, smaller in volume from the one under review by about 20 to 30 per cent. Such a study would of course be different both in terms of its structure and in terms of its narrative, and, given the heterogeneity of the source material and the limited comparability of the experiences of *dramatis personæ*, would suffer from obvious *lacunæ* in the presentation of the main topic.

Not only does Wolsza thoroughly reconstruct the lives of those who were directly confronted with the reality of the death pits in the Katyń Forest, but he also offers a critical review of the existing opinions about the topic. He supplements and corrects other scholars' findings, outlines the circumstances in which various accounts (interviews, memoirs) were brought into being and popular circulation (to a lesser extent scholarly circulation), explains hypothetical and real reasons for the distorting or even fabricating of some accounts and indicates the issues that cannot be unambiguously resolved given the existing body of primary sources. By way of illustration, one can mention here the fabricated interviews with Marian Wodziński and Franciszek Prochownik published in the collaborationist press, the circumstances of the creation of writer Ferdynand Goetel's black legend or the Zygmunt Ipohorski-Lenkiewicz affair which, as a vague one, has been interpreted in a variety of ways in scholarly literature. An artistic director at the officially operating theatre 'Jar', Ipohorski-Lenkiewicz was executed in 1944 following the death sentence passed by a Home Army Special Court.⁶

Individual studies are of high stylistic and scholarly quality. However, the way in which some minor issues (those forming the background against which key problems are discussed) are presented seems open to debate or at least requires some clarification.

⁶ See, for example, a unequivocally negative opinion about Ipohorski-Lenkiewicz expressed carelessly by Stanisław Marczak-Oborski (*Teatr czasu wojny i okupacji 1939-1945*, Warsaw, 1967, p. 58).

The interesting chapter dealing with the Polish and Soviet communists' position on the Katyń crime serves as an important point of reference for all the studies that attempt to show how the people who had witnessed the Katyń exhumations were treated in 'Lublin' and communist Poland. However, in my opinion it would gain in clarity if the Soviet communists were removed from its title. Taken as a whole, the latter group, regardless of how it is defined, took no position on the issue, which absorbed the attention of just a few members of the Soviet leadership. The report prepared by the Burdenko Commission was intended for outsiders, including the Poles but excluding Soviet citizens. It formed a directive to be followed by the Polish Workers' Party and its allies, all of whom were entirely subservient to Moscow. The Soviets' concern was with the Polish society on which the Katyń massacre left a significant mark, as opposed to the society of the Soviet Federation that remained totally indifferent to it.⁷ Social sentiments and the way people in Poland were going to react to the propaganda which, in dealing with the crime, resorted to primitive ways of distorting the truth was something to be reckoned with by the communists and later by the 'Lublin' authorities. These two positions were entirely different and, as such, can hardly be compared with each other. The remark refers of course only to this chapter's title. The text itself is clear and coherent.

One important aspect of the German propaganda campaign, which involved the arranging of visits by various delegations, composed not only of Poles, to the Katyń Forest in the spring of 1943, is omitted from Wolsza's account. He neglects to mention the fact that Wehrmacht soldiers were also brought to the exhumation site. The provision of a harrowing example of the way the Soviets treated enemy soldiers was to raise the fighting spirit of the front line units and to prevent German troops from surrendering themselves as prisoners of war — a phenomenon which, in 1942 and 1943 (the battle of Stalingrad), had begun to reach alarming proportions. The groups of Wehrmacht soldiers, mainly from the Army Group Mitte, who visited Katyń each numbered a few hundred, which clearly shows the scale of the action and the importance which the German command (propaganda officers) attached to it.⁸

The way of presenting the question of the delegation of foreign journalists' encounter with the Burdenko Commission can be regarded as an example of the defects from which the construction of the work suffers.⁹ The formula of self-contained sketches, as well as Wolsza's reluctance to make use of cross-references,

⁷ There was interest in mass crimes perpetrated by the Germans against the people of the Soviet Federation, particularly in Orel, Vinnitsa and Babi Yar, and widely publicized by Sovinform.

⁸ *Facts and Documents Concerning to Polish Prisoners of War Captured by the USSR During the 1939 Campaign*, Polish Government-in-Exile, London, 1946, pp. 313–315; Andrzej Przewoźnik and Joanna Adamska, *Katyń. Zbrodnia. Prawda. Pamięć*, Warsaw, 2010, pp. 259–60.

⁹ See, for example, the question of foreign journalists' escape to the Katyń Forest, pp. 95 and 127–28 (both the account and the sources on which it is based).

forces him to repeat the same information across the whole book. Fortunately, this repetitiveness does not weigh too heavily on the book's content.

In Wolsza's opinion, Ivan Krivozertsov, interviewed by Ferdynand Goetel, was 'an eyewitness of the NKVD's executions of Polish officers in Katyń' (p. 98).¹⁰ This statement is false. Krivozertsov simply learned from his sister Daria about the movement of prison cars between the Gnezdovo station and the Katyń forest. The cars were seen carrying Polish soldiers, civilians and even a few clergymen only in one direction. So he did not witness the execution and the knowledge he acquired was clearly second-hand.¹¹

Wolsza is not precise in his account of the way the issue of the Katyń massacre was dealt with during the Nuremberg trials. In his opinion the Soviets found the Nuremberg proceedings to be less problematic than a trial held in Poland 'because of the selective choice of witnesses and arguments' (p. 46).¹² Consequently, they wanted the crime to be investigated in Nuremberg, but to a limited extent, so as to make the Germans responsible for the crime with as little effort as possible. That was certainly the final goal the Soviets were pursuing, but the way they wanted to achieve it was different. In taking their decision regarding the inclusion of the crime in the indictment, the Soviet authorities relied on article 21 of the *Statute of the International Military Tribunal* which stated: 'The Tribunal will not require proof of facts which are common knowledge, but will take them for granted. It will also consider as valid proof official documents and reports of United Nations governments, including those drawn up by the Commissions established in the various allied countries to investigate war crimes, as well as the minutes of hearings and the decisions of military or other courts of any United Nations country'.¹³ The Soviet authorities considered the Burdenko Commission's Communiqué to be a document to which the article quoted above clearly applied. As such, it did not have to be subjected to evidentiary proceedings to be held before the Tribunal. The acceptance of this document as the basis of one count of the indictment, without submitting it to a thorough examination, would mean that the view of the German perpetration of the crime received international sanction, thus dispelling all the doubts that might arise in connection with the crime. This explains why the Soviets were outraged when the remaining members of the Military Tribunal refused to accept their position, concluding that the case of the Katyń

¹⁰ 'naocznym świadkiem sowieckich egzekucji popełnionych przez NKWD na polskich oficerach w Katyniu' (p. 98).

¹¹ Jacek Trznadel, 'Rosyjscy świadkowie Katynia (1943–1946–1991)', in *Zbrodnia katyńska. Droga do prawdy. Historia, archeologia, kryminalistyka, polityka, prawo*, ed. Marek Tarczyński, Warsaw, 1992, pp. 77–126 (p. 82), *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, vol. 2.

¹² 'wybiórczy dobór świadków oraz przywoływanych argumentów' (p. 46); [the Soviets sought], 'w bardzo ograniczonym zakresie', [aby] 'najmniejszym nakładem sił i środków przerzucić odpowiedzialność za mord katyński na stronę niemiecką' (p. 99).

¹³ *Against the Crime of Silence: Proceedings of the Russell International War Crimes Tribunal*, ed. John Duffett, New York, 1968, p. 148.

massacre was far from clear in respect of the collected evidence, as demonstrated in their opinion by, for example, the German 'white book'.¹⁴ Although the Burdenko Commission's Communiqué was certainly 'an official document', the Tribunal refused to regard it as resolving the whole issue. On 12 March 1946 the Tribunal's judges declared themselves in favour of Otto Stahmer's motion, Herman Göring's attorney, to hear, in the examination of the indictment regarding the Katyń massacre, three witnesses of the defence and three witnesses of the prosecution. The examination of the evidence which ensued proved a disaster to Moscow. However, the British and the Americans remained silent about it, suffering from something of a moral hangover because of the way they dealt with the issue in 1943–45, when they suppressed all the information about the real perpetrators in order to end the war in Europe and to defeat Japan with the aid of the Soviet Union.

Wolsza devotes a few words to the visit which 'Lublin' Poland's Minister of Justice, Henryk Świątkowski, and the state prosecutor Jerzy Sawicki paid to Moscow in order to exchange views about the trial of the 'participants of the Katyń provocation', that is, writers Jan Emil Skiwski and Ferdynand Goetel (p. 136). He simply follows Stefan Korboński in saying that they were told they 'had no right to touch the matter'.¹⁵ This statement is entirely false. During his conversation with Świątkowski and Sawicki, the Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs Andrei Vyshynskii not only did not attempt to prevent their engagement in the preparation of the trial but he also stated that the trial was going to be of a 'great importance' and promised to offer 'every assistance in this regard'. He asked them to present him with a plan for the organization of the trial and to 'indicate the matters with regard to which they would like to consult representatives of the Soviet judiciary'.¹⁶ He also promised to support the idea of sending Polish prosecutors to Sofia, Prague and Helsinki to interview members of the former International Medical Board, and still during their visit the list of the cities was supplemented with Brussels, The Hague and Bern. Eventually, the prosecutors were not dispatched abroad because of the changed circumstances — the Soviets' failure to charge the Germans with the Katyń massacre without carrying out normal legal proceedings. The trial of both authors was held *in absentia* as late as June 1949 in the District Court in Kraków.

In discussing the first Polish publications on the Katyń massacre, Wolsza dwells on the booklet *Katyń* published in 1943 under the fictitious name 'Andrzej Ciesielski' (p. 131). He proposes interesting hypotheses regarding the mys-

¹⁴ *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*, ed. by Deutsche Informationsstelle, Berlin, 1943.

¹⁵ [they] 'nie mają prawa nawet dotykania sprawy', Stefan Korboński, *W imieniu Rzeczypospolitej...*, Warsaw, 2009, p. 174.

¹⁶ 'wskazanie tych spraw, w których chcieliby skonsultować się z przedstawicielami sowieckich organów sądowo-śledczych', *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 4: *Echa Katyń. Kwiecień 1943–marzec 2005*, Warsaw, 2006, document 79, pp. 343–45.

terious issue of the authorship of the booklet, indicating alternatively either the Germans or the Polish Underground State. Without trying to resolve the matter, I am inclined to favour the first hypothesis. The title page features 'Gebethner and Wolf' as the booklet's publisher. However, I learned from Stanisław Gebethner that this claim had no foundation in fact. He remembered from his childhood the consternation with which his relatives reacted to the name of the family publishing house appearing on the booklet's cover. One should rather rule out the possibility of providing false information pointing directly to the publishing house involved in the clandestine activity and working closely with the Polish Underground State.

The Author adds no comment to the revelations of Borys Olshanskii (an escapee from the Red Army) concerning Nikolai Burdenko's statement, made soon before his death, that he was aware of the falsification of the Special Commission's report. These revelations are well-known, but many historians, including myself, treat them as implausible. Olshanskii — not a deserter but a worker of the Soviet occupational administration in Germany — defected/went to the West in 1947 as an intelligence officer and the information of the kind mentioned above was disseminated in order to lend him credence.

On a number of occasions Wolsza discusses the fate of the members of the International Medical Board for whom the Soviet agents organized a kind of a hunt. However, he neglects to point out that these Soviet efforts focused especially on a Hungarian doctor, Ferenc Orós, although not because of the fact that Orós had visited Katyń and Winnitsa (p. 70),¹⁷ but because he was the only member of the board who was quite unambiguous about dating the massacre to the spring of 1940. Orós relied on his own unique method of dating the death of the exhumed victims of the crime. The method was based on the examination of the progression of the osseous cranial changes (limestone salt deposits). However, other members of the board, sceptical about the possibility of dating the massacre under so specific and unknown conditions (the huge accumulation of bodies accompanied by untypical chemical processes, specific soil, huge annual temperature variations) were mistrustful of his approach. As a member of the board he was thus very important to the Soviets and if he had retracted his previous opinions, declaring he had acted under pressure from the Germans, it would have been of great propagandistic value to the Soviets.¹⁸

Taking the above into account, one can hardly agree with the opinion that 'all the members of the board stated, in accordance with the report, that the massacre took place in the spring of 1940'.¹⁹ The problem faced by the Germans, to

¹⁷ [He] 'miał on za sobą wizytę w Katyniu i Winnicy' (p. 70).

¹⁸ The Soviets' concern about Orós's opinion and a possibility of proving the reliability of his method is widely dealt with in a documentary by Grażyna Czermińska about MKL *Poświęcając życie prawdzie*. The documentary has recently been shown on the TVP History.

¹⁹ 'stwierdzili zgodnie z protokołem [...], że morderstwo zostało dokonane na wiosnę 1940 roku' (p. 75).

whose efforts the Medical Board owed its existence, was that its final report did not contain such a definitive statement²⁰ — the one which was used, and which was regarded as a compromise one, was that ‘the testimonies of witnesses, letters, notes and newspapers found with the bodies suggest that the executions took place in March and April of 1940’.²¹ However, such a statement is to some extent ambiguous and it is about this ambiguity that the board’s members argued, resolving the issue in a way which was not fully satisfactory to the Germans.

Wolsza relies on Jędrzej Tucholski’s lexicon for the verification of his data regarding the prisoners of war held in the special camp in Kozielsk.²² In view of the availability of later and more complete lexicons verifying information to be found in the publication prepared by Tucholski, which is not based on post-Soviet materials, such a reliance is open to debate.²³

As a whole the work is a well-written and mature piece of scholarship which gives no reason for significant critical remarks.²⁴ Footnotes are perfect. Not only do they indicate primary sources and secondary literature (of which, however, one cannot have a clear notion because of the lack of bibliography to which I have referred above), on which the Author’s account is based, but they also contain much factual information, adding significant details to the main text. However, sometimes Wolsza goes too far in his effort to avoid burdening his account with too many footnotes.²⁵

A few details can be corrected regarding the index of names. The journalist from the *Toronto Star* was called Jerome Davies and the person writing about Katyń in *Głos Wielkopolski* was Sławomir Kmiecik. It turned out to be relatively easy to identify Colonel Wiktor Pniewski and Colonel Kazimierz Wicherkiewicz. The ‘Captain Choiński’ who appears in Waclaw Pych’s confabulations is most probably Lieutenant Kazimierz Chomiński who stayed in the camp in Grazovets along

²⁰ *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 4, doc. 26, pp. 81–84. Similarly, the final report by the Technical Commission of the Polish Red Cross — *ibid.*, document 34, pp. 107–14.

²¹ ‘z zeznań świadków, listów, notatek, gazet itd. znalezionych przy zwłokach wyznika, że egzekucje odbywały się w ciągu miesiąca marca i kwietnia 1940 r.’, see Przewoźnik and Adamska, *Katyń. Zbrodnia. Prawda. Pamięć*, pp. 292–93.

²² Jędrzej Tucholski, *Mord w Katyniu. Kozielsk. Ostaszków. Starobielsk. Lista ofiar*, Warsaw, 1991, pp. 63–64.

²³ See *Zabici w Katyniu*, ed. Aleksander Gurjanow and Anna Dzieńkiewicz, Warsaw and Moscow, 2013, p. 160, Indeks Represjonowanych, vol. 21.

²⁴ It is for example possible to indicate the synonymous use of the term ‘Poles’ and ‘Polish citizens’ (see, for example, p. 7). This is a bigger problem and concerns all Polish historiography.

²⁵ See, for example, on p. 49 the information that one of those who visited Katyń was a registered and long-term informer of the Ministry of Public Security is provided without a source reference; on p. 58 Wolsza mentions that in 1952 Dr Edward Grodzki was placed under the surveillance of the Ministry of Public Security without saying where this information comes from; on p. 68 he mentions that Jakub Berman approved of the opinion expressed by Jan Olbracht without giving the source of this knowledge.

with Colonel Wicherkiewicz. Whether the Captain Miscjak and Major Dzieszyna who appear in this account were real persons or not can be verified with the help of officer annuals and other lexicographic publications.²⁶

Although thriftily distributed across the work, the iconography (photographs, facsimiles of documents and newspapers, caricatures and posters) is well chosen and helps the process of reading.

As Wolsza himself indicates (p. 25) the work does not contain the full list of those who were in the Katyń Forest in the spring of 1943 and who for this reason suffered harassment in communist Poland. However, he does not add that the book, which is the result of a thorough examination of primary sources, like no other previous publication comes close to providing such a complete list and that it will be very difficult for other historians dealing with the subject to complement it. Moreover, to a significant extent Wolsza verifies previous findings and eliminates persons who were perceived as having visited Katyń but who for a variety of reasons actually had not reached the exhumation site.²⁷ So the goal which he set himself in the preface should be regarded as having been achieved.

The critical remarks made above, usually regarding minor issues, do not affect a very positive assessment of the work. Undoubtedly, it significantly supplements the literature on the Katyń massacre. Drawing on a well-chosen collection of primary sources, it raises issues that have so far been completely ignored or dealt with in a half-hearted manner and does so in almost a fully exhaustive way.

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²⁶ *Rocznik oficerski. Stan na dzień 23 marca 1939*, ed. Ryszard Rybka and Kamil Stepan, Kraków, 2006.

²⁷ Mainly from Lwów but also from Warsaw, Tarnobrzeg and Kraków, see pp. 26 ff.